

**Advisory Council for the Education of
Students with Disabilities
Minutes**

**April 14, 2008
TPS Campus, Hardison Building
1256 Foster Avenue
Nashville, TN 37243**

Members of the Council in Attendance

David Blier	Barbara Jenkins
Dawn Bradley	Mary Donnet Johnson
Samuel Cole	Beulah Oldham
Jeff Finney	Sebrena St. John
Kyle Hauth	James Topp
Cynthia Higginbotham	Myles Wilson

Members of the Council not in Attendance

Paula Brownyard	Janelle Glover
Pamela Burns	Fran Powers
Winnie Forrester	

State Employees in Attendance

Bob Blair, TN Department of Education/Division of Special Education (TDE/DSE)
Calvin Burden, TDE/DSE
Steve Dugger, TN Department of Children's Services (DCS)
Joseph Fisher, TDE/DSE
Jessica Harbison, TDE/DSE
Nathan Jackson, TDE/DSE
Nan McKerley, TDE/DSE
Bill Wilson, TDE/DSE

Visitors in Attendance

Susan Dalton, TN Education Association (TEA)
holly lu conant rees, Disability Coalition on Education
Erin Richardson, The Arc of Davidson County
Loria Richardson, The Arc of Tennessee/ Project LINK
Rex Roberts, Former Council Member
Walter Rogers, The Arc of Tennessee
Gloria Shelton, Parent
Janet Shouse, Autism Society of Middle Tennessee
Ned Solomon, Developmental Disabilities Council

Welcome & Introduction

Dr. Topp called the meeting to order by having the Council members and guests recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Topp announced two new members had been appointed to the Council. Pamela Burns will be replacing Rex Roberts in representing parents of children with disabilities and Janelle Glover will be representing Charter Schools. They were unable to attend this meeting.

Acceptance of Agenda

The agenda was accepted without comments.

Approval of Minutes from January 7, 2008 meeting

The minutes were accepted as presented.

Report from the Chair

Dr. Topp presented the following points of interest:

- Legislators are currently discussing a proposal (Senate Bill 3668) to remove State of TN Officials address's from the general public rolls. Senator Finney could not amend the bill at that point and Dr. Topp was advised to contact a Senator from his home district prior to the next session so that the persons who serve on Commissions, Boards, Councils etc., could have the same protection. He stated that he plans to contact his Senator on this and encouraged the other Council members to as well.
- The State Advisory Panel Interagency Coordinating Council will be conducting a meeting in Charleston, South Carolina next week which is sponsored and coordinated by the Mid-South Regional Resource Center in Kentucky. Jeff Finney, Council Vice-Chair, and Nan McKerley, TDE/DSE's Council Liaison, will be attending on behalf of the Council and the Department.
- The 2008 Annual Special Education Spring Conference was held February 27-29, 2008. Due to illness, Dr. Topp was unable to attend; however, Jeff Finney attended and will share his thoughts later in the meeting.

Public Input

Gloria Shelton was present to address the Council regarding concerns over her son's class/classroom size. She shared a packet of information detailing the amount of classroom space available to the children in this particular class and asked if the Council could look at what would be needed to change situations like this one. Dr. Topp explained that this group can strictly operate in an advisory capacity and suggested she also speak to the State Board of Education. Council members Mary Donnet Johnson, David Blier and Samuel Cole volunteered to sit down together to consider this issue. They will present their suggestions to the Council at the July meeting

Recognition of Rex Roberts

Dr. Topp presented Rex Roberts with a Certificate of Recognition in appreciation of his 13 years of service on the Council. Rex expressed how proud he was to have spent so many years working for children with special needs and how impressive others who work for these children are in their dedication and passion. Rex also served for many years as a mediator for the Department.

Update of Revision of State Rules & Regulations

Bill Wilson started with an overview of the State Rules and Regulations which went into effect February 13, 2008. A WebEx training was conducted and recorded and can be found on the TDE/DSE website. Then Mr. Wilson moved on to the bills that are currently being considered by the State Legislature and the outcomes they may have on special education. For information on these and other pending legislation, committee schedules and agendas, go to <http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/>.

High School Policy Rule

Joseph Fisher outlined the revised high school graduation requirements which aim to emphasize “rigor and relevance” by setting higher standards for proficiency and academic performance. Under the new guidelines, three (3) Gateway Exams will be eliminated and replaced by nine (9) End of Course Exams. These will become effective with the freshman class of 2009. A new “Transition Certificate” has been developed and may be awarded to a student with a disability (SWD) who, at the end of the 4th year of high school, has failed to earn a regular diploma (22 units of credit) but have satisfactorily completed an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct. Since the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) states services must be provided as necessary through age twenty-two (22), a SWD may continue to work towards the high school diploma through the end of the school year in which they turn twenty-two (22). An “IEP Certificate” will replace the old “Special Education Diploma” and will be awarded to the SWD who (1) satisfactorily completes his/her IEP, (2) successfully completes a portfolio and (3) has satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.

Report on Special Education Spring Conference

Jeff Finney described this year’s Conference, held February 27 – 29, 2008 at the Nashville Airport Marriott, as one of the best so far. All sessions were informative and well planned.

Other New Business

The Council set a tentative meeting schedule as follows:

- * July 21, 2008
- * October 20, 2008
- * January 12, 2009
- * April 20, 2009

Hearing no other business, Dr. Topp adjourned the meeting.